Turning Conflict into Positive Outcomes

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Conflict

When thinking about a conflict, what comes to mind for you? How did you feel? What did it look like? What was the impact?
Conflict happens

Don’t be surprised by it.
Conflict is normal, natural, and to be expected.
Conflict

Danger    Opportunity
Conflict is dangerous, but holds opportunities

- Clarification
- Healing
- Understanding
- Movement
- Creativity
- Problem Solving
- Growth
- Relationship improvement

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Dealing with emotions is hard.

High emotions increase when an outcome holds critical importance to us.
When conflict escalates, resolution is more difficult because:

- Tactics go from light to heavy
- Positions become more polarized and people more risk averse
- Issues expand
- Specific issues move to general issues
- Motivations change:
  - Doing well
  - Winning
  - Teaching a Lesson
A Conflict Manager’s Toolbox

- Separate the person from the problem
- Find the interests
- Determining levels of a message
- Validation tools
Goal: Problem Solving

Separate the person from the problem.

When people disagree, they often see the other person as the “problem.”

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Goal: Problem Solving

Separate the person from the problem.

The goal is to put the “problem” on the other side of the table and work together to resolve it.
Problem Solving

Separate positions from interests
20% Positions

80% Interests

- Demands
- Expectations
- Solutions
- Needs
- Values
- Beliefs
- Fears
Recognize the Positions and Uncover the Interests

• **Positions** are the solutions offered.
  “I expect ...”
  “I want ...”
  “You should ...”
  “This is what must happen ...”

• **Interests** are the motivations.
  “I need ...”
  “I value ...”
  “I fear ...”
  “I hope ...”

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Go under positions to find the interests

- What need is this position attempting to satisfy?
- What is motivating the person?
- What is the person emphasizing so it will be heard and understood?
- What is the person afraid will happen if a demand is not fulfilled?
Positions and Interests

Dad’s Position:
Be home by 10:00 p.m.

Possible Interests:
- Safety
- Worry about bad choices
- Want to be a responsible parent
- Values boundaries
- Don’t want son to turn out like his brother
Positions and Interests

Son’s Position:
Be home by 2:00 a.m.

Possible Interests:
- Having fun
- Not being controlled
- Freedom/independence
- Peer approval
- Social interaction
- Time away from home
- Concert doesn’t end until late
Positions vs. Interests

Position
“1:1 aide”

Interests:
• safety
• social growth
• academic success
• physical assistance
• LRE
• individual attention
Finding the Interests

- How has this affected you?
- What do you think will happen if we do ___?
- Can you explain how this is important to you?
- How does this solve the issue?
- What is blocking you from ______?
- What do you need to move forward?
Unpacking Messages
Distinguish Levels of a Message

Whew! The cat box stinks!

Content Level
- She noticed it smells bad.

Emotional Level
- She seems irritated and anxious. She did ask me to clean it this morning and I said I would.

Get it? Cat box.
Content Paraphrase

Paraphrase the issue or the position that the speaker presents without agreeing or disagreeing.

This is a good tool to reassure you heard the message.
Examples of a Content Paraphrase

- “As I understand it, you’re recommending the STAR reading program with additional supports with a small group.”

- “To clarify, you have concerns about how Taylor is managing transitioning from one subject to another during the day.”
Distinguish Levels of a Message

Whew! The cat box stinks!

Get it? Cat box.

Content Level

Emotional Level
Emotional Paraphrase

Paraphrase the emotion or relational level of the message.

Don’t be afraid to guess.
Effective Emotional Paraphrase

Paraphrase the emotion or relational level of the message.

You’re __(emotion)__ by/when ___(situation/behavior)__.

“You’re bothered by ____________.”
“You’re frustrated when ____________.”
“You’re concerned with ____________.”
Emotional Paraphrasing

You’re (emotion) by/when (situation/behavior).

- “You’re frustrated by the amount of time spent on her math homework.”
- “You’re worried about Jack’s progress in handwriting.”
- “You’re concerned this placement separates Jenny from her peers.”

Don’t be afraid to guess.
Effective Message Framing

This is a very effective tool when you need to get across an important message, too.

“I’m ____(emotion)____ by/when ____(situation/behavior)____.”

“I’m bothered by ________________.”
“I’m frustrated when ____________.”
“I’m concerned with ____________.”
Questions
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